

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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R 291225Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6885

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 3739

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR NG NI

SUBJECT: VISIT OF GENERAL GOWON TO NIAMEY FOR NIGER-NIGERIAN
JOINT COMMISSION

REF: NIAMEY 3700

1. TWENTY-FOUR HOUR VISIT OF GENERAL GOWON TO NIAMEY DECEMBER 21-22 FOR MEETING OF NIGER-NIGERIAN JOINT COMMISSION WAS MARKED BY CORDIAN AND RELAXED ATTITUDES BOTH SIDES. GOWON AND DIORI SEEM TO GET ALONG WELL WITH EACH OTHER AND THIS SET TONE OF VISIT. AS IN PAST ENCOUNTERS THEY SPENT MUCH TIME IN PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS. ACCORDINGLY, FORMAL MEETINGS OF JOINT COMMISSION WERE LARGELY CEREMONIAL OR CONCERNED WITH FLESHING OUT DECISIONS REACHED BY TWO HEADS OF STATE. AFTER NEARLY TWO YEARS OF EXISTING MOSTLY ON PAPER, NIGER-NIGERIAN JOINT COMMISSION IS AT LAST A REALITY WITH AN APPROVED BUDGET AND PERSONNEL STAFFING PATTERN AND A MULTITUDE OF TASKS TO TACKLE.

2. AMONG MAIN ISSUES RAISED BY GON WERE FOLLOWING: NIGER
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RIVER NAVIGATION INCLUDING MARKING OF CHANNELS AND TARIFFS

FOR USE OF LOCKS AT KAINJI DAM, EASING OF RESTRICTIONS ON SALE OF LIVESTOCK TO NIGERIA AND PAYMENTS THEREOF; AND UNRESOLVED ASPECTS OF THE SALE OF KAINJI DAM ELECTRICITY TO NIGER. GON PARTICULARLY CRITICAL THAT DELAY BY NIGERIANS IN MARKING CHANNEL RESULTS IN FAILURE OF SECOND TEST CUOF BARGES FROM PORT HARCOURT TO GAYA. GON REPORTEDLY PROMISED BY NIGERIANS THAT POSITIVE ACTION WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. IT WAS AGREED THAT TARIFF AND POWER QUESTIONS WOULD BE WORKED OUT BY EXPERTS UNDER COMMISSION AEGIS. PROBLEMS REGARDING LIVESTOCK TRANSACTIONS COMPLICATED AND WILL LIKELY REMAIN UNRESOLVED FOR SOME TIME ALTHOUGH FMG SAID TO BE SOMEWHAT SYMPATHETIC TO PLAINTS OF NIGERIENS THAT THEY BEING SEVERELY PENALIZED BY RESTRICTIVE NIGERIAN MEASURES.

3. NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD ME TWO HEADS OF STATE DISCUSSED INTER ALIA QUESTION OF SALE OF NIGERIAN POL TO NIGER (RAISED BY DIORI); PROBLEMS CAUSED BY NIGERIEN NOMADS AND FARMERS WHO HAVE BEEN GOING MUCH FURTHER SOUTH INTO NIGERIA THAN USUAL DURING PAST TWO YEARS (RAISED BY GOWON); AND GENERAL SUBJECT OF WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION. GENERAL GOWON WAS REPORTEDLY NON-COMMITT) 9, 98); CONCERNED REGARDING HEAVY INFLUX OF NIGERIENS ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF DROUGHT CONDITIONS ALSO IN NORTHERN NIGERIA; AND FIRM IN REPEATING NIGERIAN POSITION OF OPPOSITION AND DISTRUST TOWARD EXCLUSIVELY FRANCOPHONE-CFA ECONOMIC GROUPINGS OF WHICH NIGER IS PART.

4. ALTHOUGH MEETINGS BETWEEN HEADS OF STATE AND DELEGATIONS WERE REDORTEDLY FRIENDLY AND OFTEN PUNCTUATED BY CAMARADERIE (PARTICULARLY BETWEEN THE HAUSA SPEAKERS), THERE APPARENTLY WAS A FEELING AMONG NIGERIANS THAT DIORI AND HIS MINISTERS HAD TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF OCCASION TO PRESS INORDINATELY LONG AND POTENTIALLY COSTLY LIST OF REQUESTS UPON FMG. NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR SAID HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE QUOTE ON DEFENSIVE UNQUOTE MOST OF TIME AND WERE SOMEWHAT CHARGINED BY DIORI'S TACTICS. NIGER OFFICIALS ON OTHER HAND SEEM PLEASED WITH RESULTS OF MEETINGS. THEY CLEARLY REGARD NIGERIA AS POTENTIAL AID DONOR AND INTEND TO USE JOINT COMMISSION AS VEHICLE BY WHICH NIGERIA CAN MAKE SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO NIGER'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

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